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MEMORANDUM

To: Clayton Wong
Fiscal Officer

From: Councilmember Ron Menor
Council District 9

Date: February 24, 2016

Re: Travel Report on Trip to San Francisco to Evaluate the City's Programs to Deal
With Homeless Issues

The following is a summary of information which I obtained about programs which have been implemented in San Francisco to address the City's burgeoning homeless problem. The information which I gathered is based on my research, my meetings with San Francisco officials and site visits which I conducted at various homeless projects in the City. These meetings and site visits took place on November 23 and November 24, 2015.

Project Homeless Connect

On November 23, 2015, I met with Emily Cohen, Deputy Director of Project Homeless Connect, at their offices. Ms. Cohen informed me that the program was established by City officials in 2004 in response to the thousands of homeless people in San Francisco who were having trouble accessing the help that they need. She described the program as a connecting point – the first point of engagement for many of the City's most vulnerable residents.

The programs offered by Project Homeless Connect are twofold. The first is a daily program that is open from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at their offices which serves up to 55 homeless individuals every day. Services are provided in-house or over the phone. The widely utilized programs in the office setting provide dentures, prescription glasses, and hygiene items to the homeless. Through services such as Shelter Connect and Vision Connect, front-line staff also help to link participants to services that they can access in the community. Project Homeless Connect also partners with nonprofits to bring their programs for the homeless to community facilities.

On two Fridays each month, Project Homeless Connect conducts vision and dental events. These involve transporting participants to optometrists and dentists in the area. The program also has a partnership with the dental and optometry schools at the University of the Pacific and University of San Francisco whose students volunteer to provide services. Mobile vans are also utilized in various parts of the community to provide vision and dental services. Much of these services are provided on a voluntary basis.

The other major program of Project Homeless Connect is a huge City-wide event that is held five times each year at the Bill Graham Auditorium across from City Hall. It is a one-stop shop service event that mobilizes thousands of volunteers, and social service providers who provide services to a large number of homeless individuals at each event where they can obtain glasses, groceries, medical care, and other services that participants might otherwise have a difficult time accessing on their own.

Each event attracts approximately 1,700 homeless participants. Organizing each event requires an extensive effort. At the last event which was held on December 16, 2015, approximately 100 organizations participated. The thousands of volunteers came from diverse fields including social services, technology, business and finance, education, law, healthcare, and professional services. The event also had a large number of corporate sponsors.

Moreover, before each event, volunteers undertake an extensive publicity campaign to ensure a good turnout from the homeless community. There is outreach to individuals and a wide distribution of flyers on the streets as well as media coverage. There are four staff people from Project Homeless Connect who oversee the organizing of each event including a director, fundraising coordinator, volunteer coordinator, and logistics manager.

In terms of organizing a similar event in Honolulu, Ms. Cohen emphasized that the active involvement and support of the Mayor's office and his administration are important to the success of such an event. Furthermore, she indicated that coalitions which have been organized to address homelessness issues as well as non-profit service providers also need to be engaged. In addition, Ms. Cohen pointed out that some communities utilize faith-based organizations and that the United Way has also assisted in coordinating similar events in other localities.

Here on Oahu, dozens of churches and more than a thousand volunteers have come together each year to organize the Convoy of Hope event that provides thousands of homeless and low income persons and families with food and services that they cannot afford. State and City government officials should provide support to more of these kinds of events in the future.

Project Homeless Connect operates on an annual budget of \$1.4 million and has a total staff of 15 people including 4 social workers. 72% of their budget is funded by the City with remaining funds coming from corporate and individual donors.

A few of the accomplishments of Project Homeless Connect in 2015 included: 3,109 pairs of glasses and 40 sets of dentures distributed; the development of a mobile app to improve data collection and evaluation; and a redesigned website ProjectHomelessConnect.org.

In terms of addressing Oahu's homeless problem, Ms. Cohen recommended that our City should focus on developing permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals who have mental health and substance abuse issues (the "Housing First" model). She also emphasized the need to build more affordable housing, providing rental subsidies, and maintaining an adequate public housing stock for those who are able to work and need affordable housing, but who do not require counseling and treatment services.

Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco

On November 23, 2015, I also met with Karen Gruneisen who is the Associate Director of Episcopal Community Services (ECS) which is one of the largest homeless service providers in San Francisco. The program owns and/or manages five short term emergency shelters, education and employment services, permanent supportive housing which includes 791 units for single adults and 97 apartments for homeless families, and senior services for over 1,500 homeless low-income seniors aged 60 and older.

Another important and innovative program offered by ECS is CHEFS (Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Service) which is a vocational training program that provides homeless and/or disabled adults twelve weeks of classroom and hands-on kitchen training. Those who successfully complete the training are placed in twelve-week industry internships. They also receive job placement and counseling.

An offshoot of CHEFS is a social enterprise program which ECS recently started called *CHEFS Kitchens: A Program of Episcopal Community Services*. Under this program, ECS has set up meal kitchens at their various shelters, senior center, and educational center which prepares students for food industry jobs while producing the meals that are part of other ECS programs. CHEFS Kitchens also provides catering services to local companies including tech firms and nonprofit organizations which not only provides invaluable culinary training experience for homeless participants, but also generates revenue for the program.

Ms. Gruneisen gave me a tour of three of ECS' facilities. I came away very impressed with these facilities in terms of their appearance and cleanliness, the positive disposition of the tenants whom I met, and the accessibility of programs and services at the facilities.

The first facility which I toured was ECS' multi-story Eighth Street office building. It includes meeting rooms, 47 apartment units for homeless families and provides adult education, counseling, and case management services.

The second facility was Bishop Swing Community House (BSCH) which is a 5-story, 134-unit permanent supportive housing project that was completed in July 2009. In

addition to providing apartment units that offer privacy and security, the facility is well-staffed with property managers, support service coordinators, and case managers. I was extremely impressed with the wrap-around services that are provided. There are meeting rooms for counseling, recreation, and tenant group meetings. There is a community kitchen for use by the tenants. Treatment services are also provided to tenants who suffer from mental health and/or substance abuse issues. These services are provided either on-site by healthcare providers and doctors, or tenants are referred out to providers in the community.

BSCH also has flexible rules in allowing tenants to have companion pets. Tenants are also required to pay some rent through SSI or welfare assistance. They also participate in the food stamp program and are eligible for City subsidies for food purchases.

BSCH is also one of the sites which offers CHEFS Kitchens Programs. I observed firsthand students preparing and serving lunch to low-income seniors in the cafeteria under the supervision of a trained chef who works at one of the local food establishments. Again, I came away extremely impressed. Government officials definitely need to develop more of these kinds of vocational training programs on Oahu.

Since BSCH is based on the Housing First model, tenants are allowed to reside in an apartment unit even if they are not clean and sober from drugs and/or alcohol. Ms. Gruneisen indicated that they have encountered very few problems with tenants who have mental health and/or substance abuse issues. She thinks one reason for this is that tenants have an incentive to stay or become clean because they do not want to lose the benefit of living in the desirable and positive living environment that BSCH has to offer.

The final facility which I visited was the Sanctuary. The facility provides 200 beds for homeless adult women and men, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with substance abuse issues. The Sanctuary operates on a harm reduction model. Stays of up to 180 days are permitted. Longer stays involve case management and participation in shelter efforts to maintain and enhance the environment. Breakfast and dinners are provided while participants can receive case management and behavioral services through SF START team, health clinics, housing access group, recovery groups, and other support groups.

Ms. Gruneisen brought up an interesting point. The City of San Francisco implemented a "Care Not Cash" program under former Mayor Gavin Newsome in which a tenant agrees to a lower amount of general assistance in exchange for a government subsidized apartment unit. This arrangement has not only freed up funds for the development of apartment units for the homeless, but has also created an incentive for tenants who were formerly homeless to seek employment. In terms of revenue sources to support ECS programs, \$15.4 million are derived from government support, \$2.3 million from private revenue, and \$2.9 million from program income.

Community Housing Partnership

On November 23, 2015, I also had a meeting with Gail Gilman, Executive Director of Community Housing Partnership (CHP). According to Ms. Gilman, CHP has built and managed high quality supportive housing since 1990 to help homeless individuals, families, seniors, and children. Their programs include case management, employment services, health services, youth and family programs, and community engagement.

CHP is also based on the Housing First Model placing chronically homeless individuals with mental health and addiction problems into apartment units first and then providing them with the services they need once they become residents. CHP's position is that permanent supportive housing, which combines safe and stable housing with on-site support services, is the most efficacious intervention to stabilize the most vulnerable segments of the community and that it is the most cost effective as well over the long term.

The organization of CHP is comprised of three segments: The Real Estate team which brings new buildings into their portfolio; the Property Management team which oversees operations of the facilities; and Support Services which provide case management for the tenants. For Fiscal Year 2014, CHP collected \$17,741,330 in revenue from various sources including rental income, government grants and contracts, management fees, foundation grants, and corporate and individual contributions.

In terms of supportive housing, CHP provides apartments for formerly homeless individuals at 14 buildings across San Francisco for a total of 1,071 units with 303 units in development. Overall, CHP's work impacts 1,500 formerly homeless individuals every year.

Among its impressive activities are CHP's social enterprise Solutions SF which employs 150 people, and its annual fundraising benefit A Night With The Stars that showcases the talents of their tenants and clients. The ultimate objective of CHP is to create a housing ladder in which their tenants can reach self-sufficiency and lead healthy and productive lives.

I was given a tour of one of CHP's permanent supportive housing projects Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments. It was an impressive facility. Richardson Apartments is a five story apartment building which was opened in August, 2011 and includes 120 studio apartment units – each with a separate kitchenette and bathroom - for single adults. The apartment building is an attractively designed and well-maintained facility that blends in with the upscale neighborhood in which it is located. The building includes ample program spaces for counseling and therapy sessions and meetings, as well as common areas, including an attractive courtyard with plants and flower beds and a rooftop garden. The building also includes commercial spaces which are leased to businesses generating revenues for the program.

University of California San Francisco's Citywide Case Management program provides tenant services. Citywide, in partnership with the San Francisco Department of Health,

offers direct behavioral health services to support residents in maintaining housing stability. They also provide linkages to ongoing services with outside providers as well as medical and psychiatric services. In fact, I was informed by the CHP administrator who conducted the tour that the apartment complex employs a full-time psychiatrist and nursing staff which provides services on-site. I was also told that the facility has generally not had problems with tenants suffering from mental health and addiction problems.

Navigation Center

On November 24, 2015, I did a site visit of the Navigation Center where I met with Sam Dodge, Director of the Mayor's Office of H.O.P.E. (Housing, Opportunities, Partnerships and Engagement). We had a lengthy discussion about the center's operations, and I was given a tour of the facility. Opened in March 2015, the Navigation Center, which was developed by Episcopal Community Services, is a pilot program designed to help the homeless population, many living in encampments, who refuse to go into shelters because they do not want to be separated from a partner, possessions, or their pets. The persons serviced by the Center are those who have material or psychological barriers to using traditional shelters.

The capacity is 75 beds and the goal is to rapidly rehouse those who stay at the Center. The Center provides participants room and board while case managers work to connect them to stable income, public benefits, and permanent housing. The Center includes a common courtyard, storage for belongings, meals, showers, laundry, and dormitory accommodations for clients and their pets. Meals are provided by Meals on Wheels.

During the tour, I observed that the buildings were in excellent condition, well-maintained, and were clean and sanitary. The Center's staff includes an Operations Director, supervisors for each shift, case managers, case aides and a janitorial staff. Interestingly, there is no security staff onsite. The Center's staff are instructed to call police if trouble occurs.

According to Mr. Dodge, the program has been successful in attracting homeless individuals to the Center who had otherwise shunned traditional shelters. A key to the Center's success has been an accommodation of the "three P's" of pets, partners, and possessions. Clients are allowed to bring in their companion pets. Couples are also permitted to stay at the facility. Moreover, clients are permitted to bring in whatever possessions they have which Center staff help clients to sort through and store.

Mr. Dodge also indicated that clients have praised operational staff and case management for being sensitive to their needs and committed to their jobs. Clients also like the lenient program rules and lack of a curfew, which allow them to "come and go" as they please. In addition, although drugs and alcohol cannot be consumed on the premises, clients who are intoxicated or under the influence are not denied entry into the Center unlike traditional shelters. Furthermore, clients of the Center have first priority to reside in apartment units as they become vacant in Housing First projects. This arrangement

provides an additional incentive for homeless persons, who have been living on the streets, to seek admission to the Center.

Mr. Dodge indicated that since its opening, the Center has encountered few problems under the relaxed rules. Concerning pets, the Center requires owners to have their pets vaccinated and to closely supervise them and have them on leashes. The Center closely monitors the pet dogs and separates them if they do not get along.

According to Mr. Dodge, the presence of couples at the Center has generally not been problematic, except when couples occasionally get into arguments. Center officials are also vigilant about female clients potentially being victimized in a mixed gender environment. At the Center, 85% of the population are single individuals, and 15% are homeless couples.

Many homeless persons are encouraged to enter the Navigation Center because of the accommodations and services that the Center provides. Meals and television viewing are available to clients 24 hours a day. The dormitories provide a quiet and safe place for clients to rest which helps to promote their emotional and psychological health. In fact, according to Mr. Dodge, incidents of violence and disruptive behavior have been minimal since its opening.

Welfare workers, health professionals, and social service agencies also provide on-site services to clients at the center. Mr. Dodge pointed out that the success of the Center thus far is evidenced by the fact that there is a waiting list of people trying to get into the Center. He also indicated that what has helped to encourage homeless individuals to seek shelter at the Navigation Center are the presence of homeless outreach teams that are comprised of social workers who spend days on the streets interacting with, and gaining the trust of homeless individuals who struggle with placement options.

Mr. Dodge also offered his opinions on a number of other issues relating to homelessness. He does not believe that San Francisco's sit-lie law has really worked. It may have helped in the short-term to move homeless people out of certain locations, but he does not view it as a long-term solution to homelessness. He also shared his belief that poverty is the prime reason why many become homeless. Therefore, in his view, the key to addressing the long-term needs of homeless families is rapid rehousing which includes providing them with rent subsidies and working with realtors in finding apartment units that they can rent. He emphasized that more affordable housing needs to be developed. He also advised against tent cities which he says are hard to shut down and eventually become "shanty towns".

San Francisco Pit Stop

The Pit Stop program, which is operated by the San Francisco Department of Public Works, provides public toilets, sinks, used needle receptacles, and dog waste stations in neighborhoods in San Francisco where large numbers of homeless people living on the streets congregate. The program utilizes both portable toilets, which are trucked to and from the sites daily after overnight servicing, and the self-cleaning toilets located at

various sites throughout downtown San Francisco. The program, which began in July 2014, operates at nine locations providing an alternative to using streets and sidewalks as places to urinate and defecate.

On November 24, 2015, I was given a tour of the Pit Stop sites by Rachel Gordon who is the Director of Policy and Communications at the San Francisco Department of Public Works. She pointed out that Pit Stop facilities are staffed by paid attendants who help to ensure that the toilets are well-maintained and used for their intended purpose. Ms. Gordon emphasized that having an attendant at each site is essential to the success of the program. She also pointed out that the Department employs formerly homeless people as attendants which contributes to their self-esteem and helps them to become productive.

According to Ms. Gordon, the availability of Pit Stop facilities has substantially reduced the amount of urination and defecation that Public Works' crews have had to clean up on a regular basis. During my inspection of the Pit Stop facilities, I found them to be sanitary, well-maintained, and safe. The City and County of Honolulu should seriously consider implementing a similar program in various parts of the island.

Ms. Gordon also gave me an interesting side tour of an area in the City where special chemical sealants have been applied to public concrete walls to make them urine resistant (i.e. urine splashes back on the person who attempts to urinate). Ms. Gordon indicated that this has also helped to discourage problems of urination in the City.

Conclusion

The San Francisco homeless projects that I visited provide models which State and City officials on Oahu should carefully examine in formulating a comprehensive strategy to deal with homeless issues. I was especially impressed with San Francisco's implementation of the Housing First program. Based on my site visits, I came to a better understanding that the objective of Housing First is the establishment of permanent supportive housing facilities which function as community based residential treatment centers and not just stand alone apartment complexes. The information that I gathered about the San Francisco programs which I have discussed in this report demonstrated to me that the Housing First model, which combines housing with wrap-around treatment and counseling services, represents a viable and effective approach in addressing the needs of our chronically homeless on this island.

Finally, my site visits and meetings with government officials in San Francisco confirmed for me that the City and County of Honolulu lags well behind other jurisdictions in the development of programs for the homeless, and that the City needs to be more proactive in addressing this issue in the future.

I have attached photographs that I took during my site visits to the homeless projects in San Francisco. It should be clarified that the number of photographs that I could take of certain facilities were limited by privacy considerations.

Photos



Councilmember Menor met with Karen Gruneisen who is the Associate Director of Episcopal Community Services (ECS) at their Eighth Street facility. ECS is one of the largest homeless service providers in San Francisco.



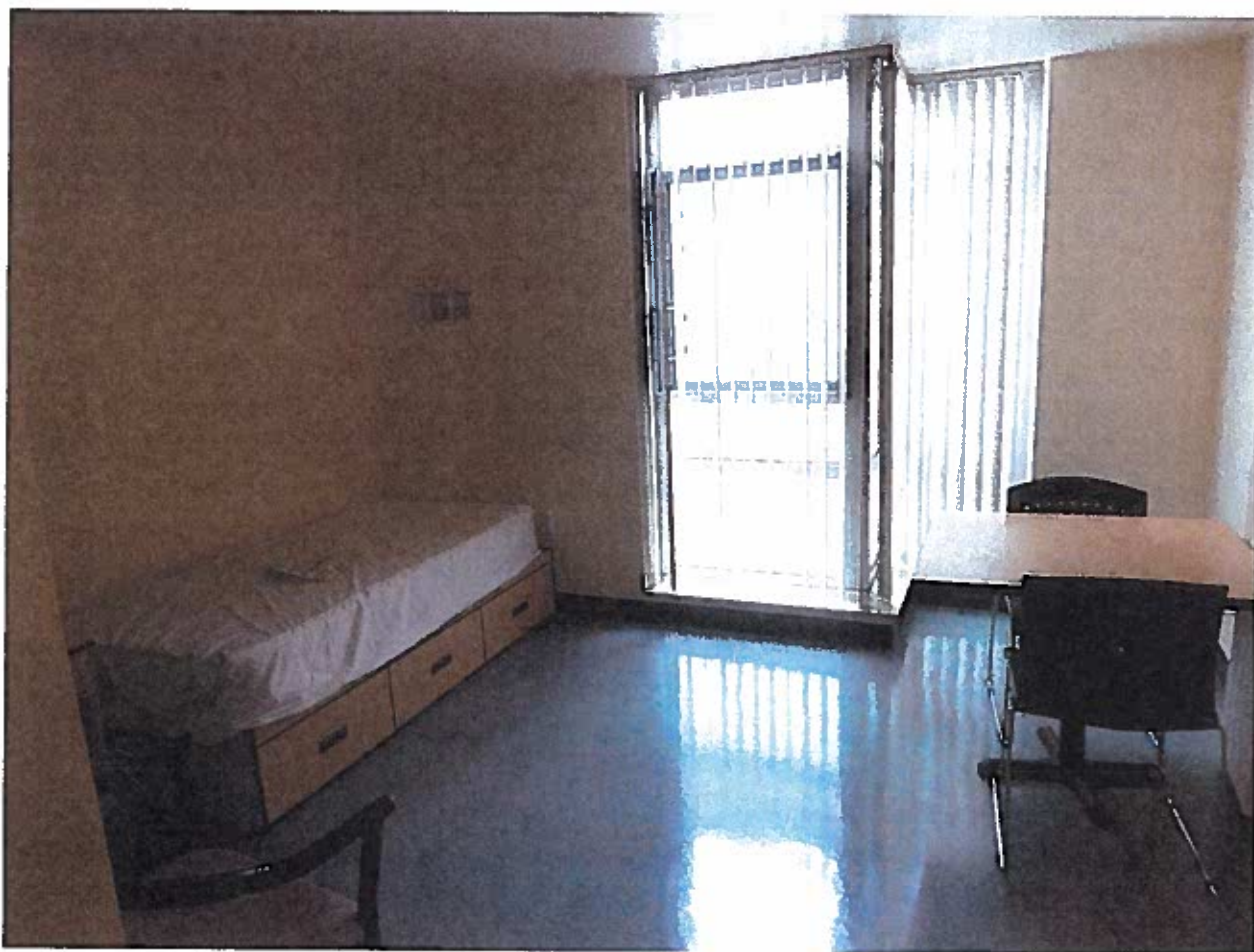
Episcopal Community Services' Bishop Swing Community House. This is a 134 unit permanent supportive housing project that was built in 2009. This housing project provides secure apartment units and is staffed with property managers, support service coordinators, and case managers. Treatment services are also available to tenants.



This is Community Housing Partnership's Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments. This housing project has been open since 2011 and is a five story building which includes 120 studio apartments. Each apartment has a private bathroom and kitchenette. The facility itself is well-maintained and blends into the neighborhood well. University of California San Francisco's Citywide Case Management program provides services to tenants.



Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments facilities.



A studio apartment at the Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments.



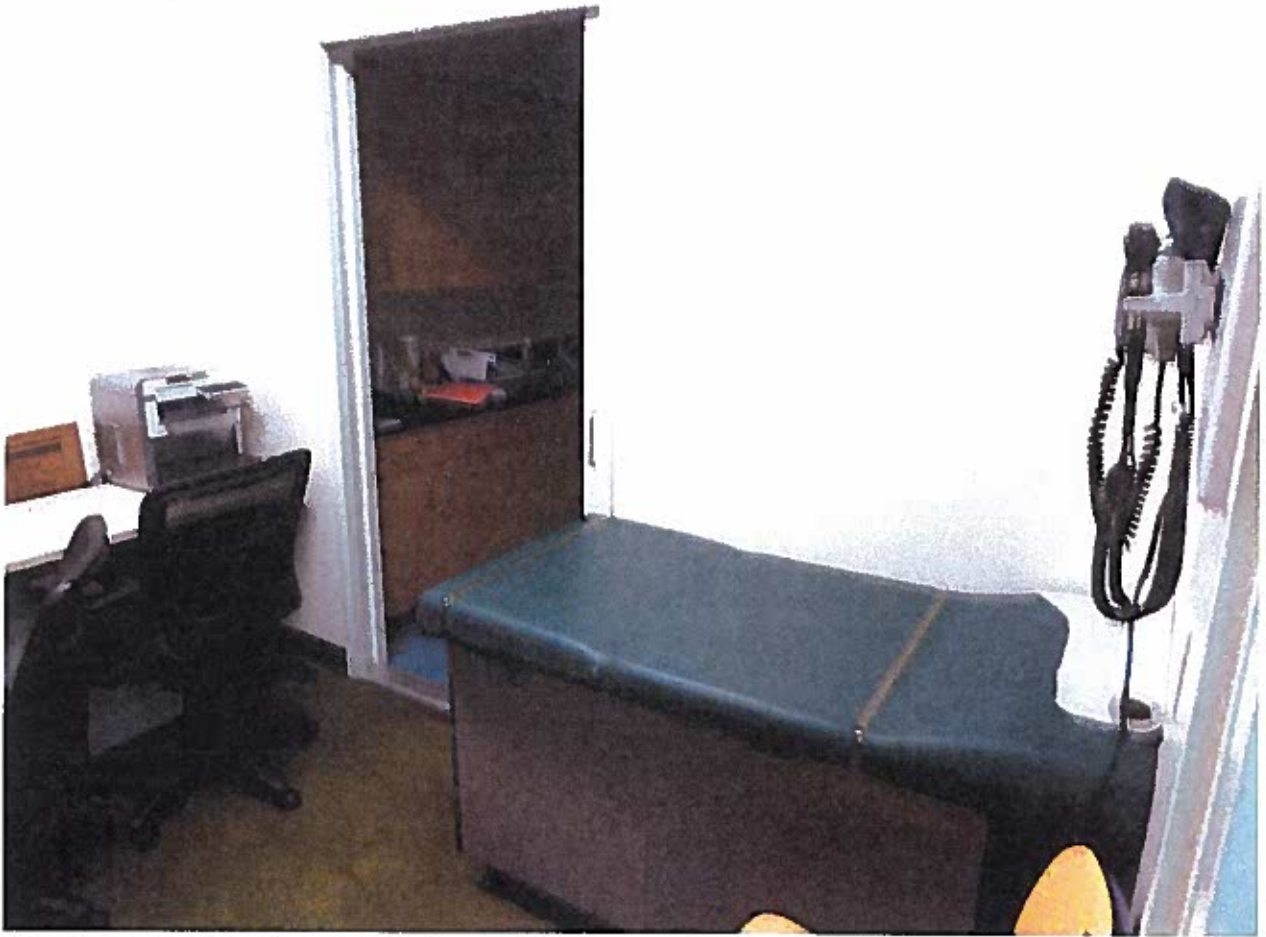
• This is a common area for residents at the Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments.



Rooftop facilities at Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments.



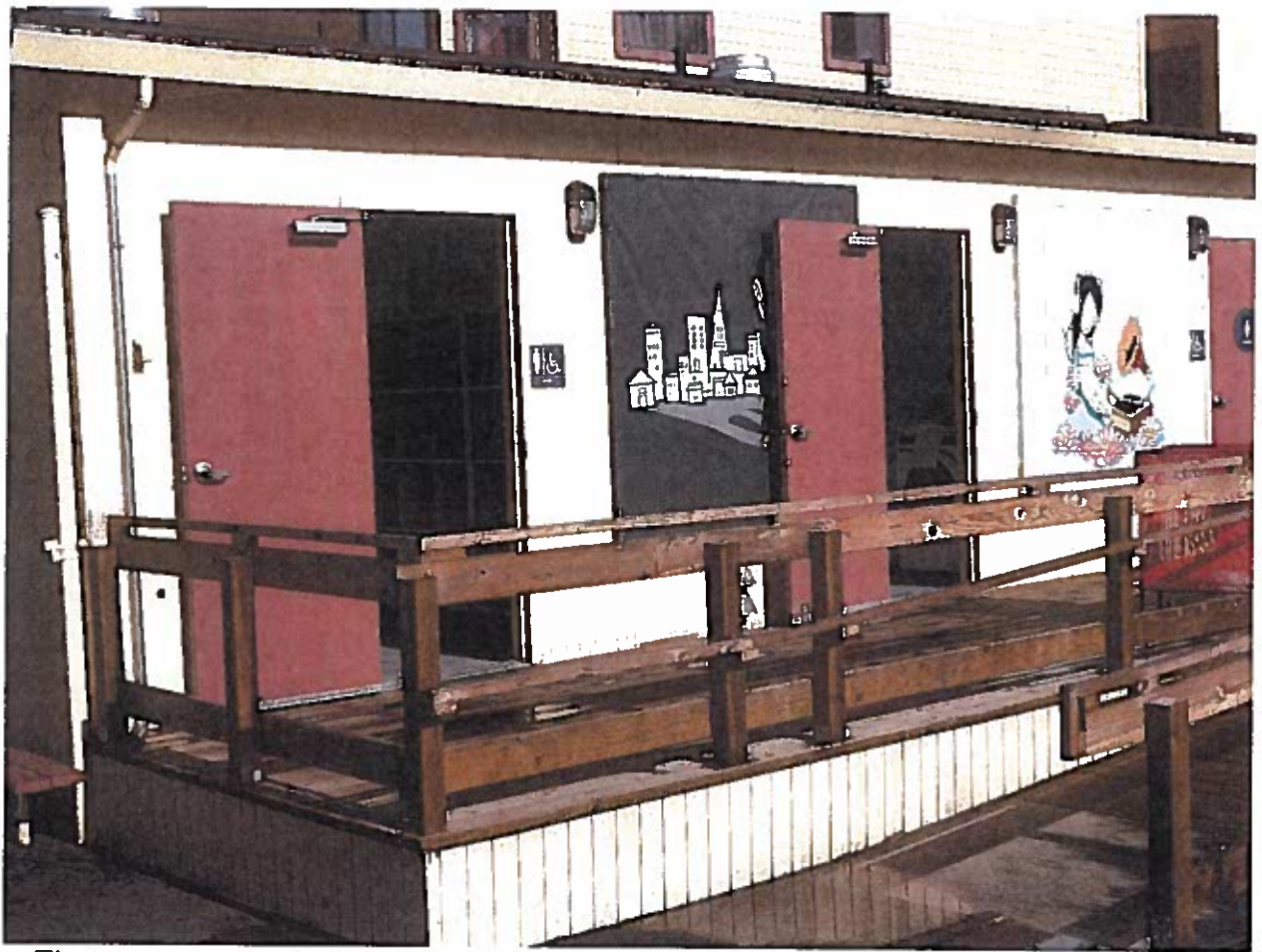
This is a common area at the Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments.



The Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments employs a full-time, on-site psychiatric and nursing staff.



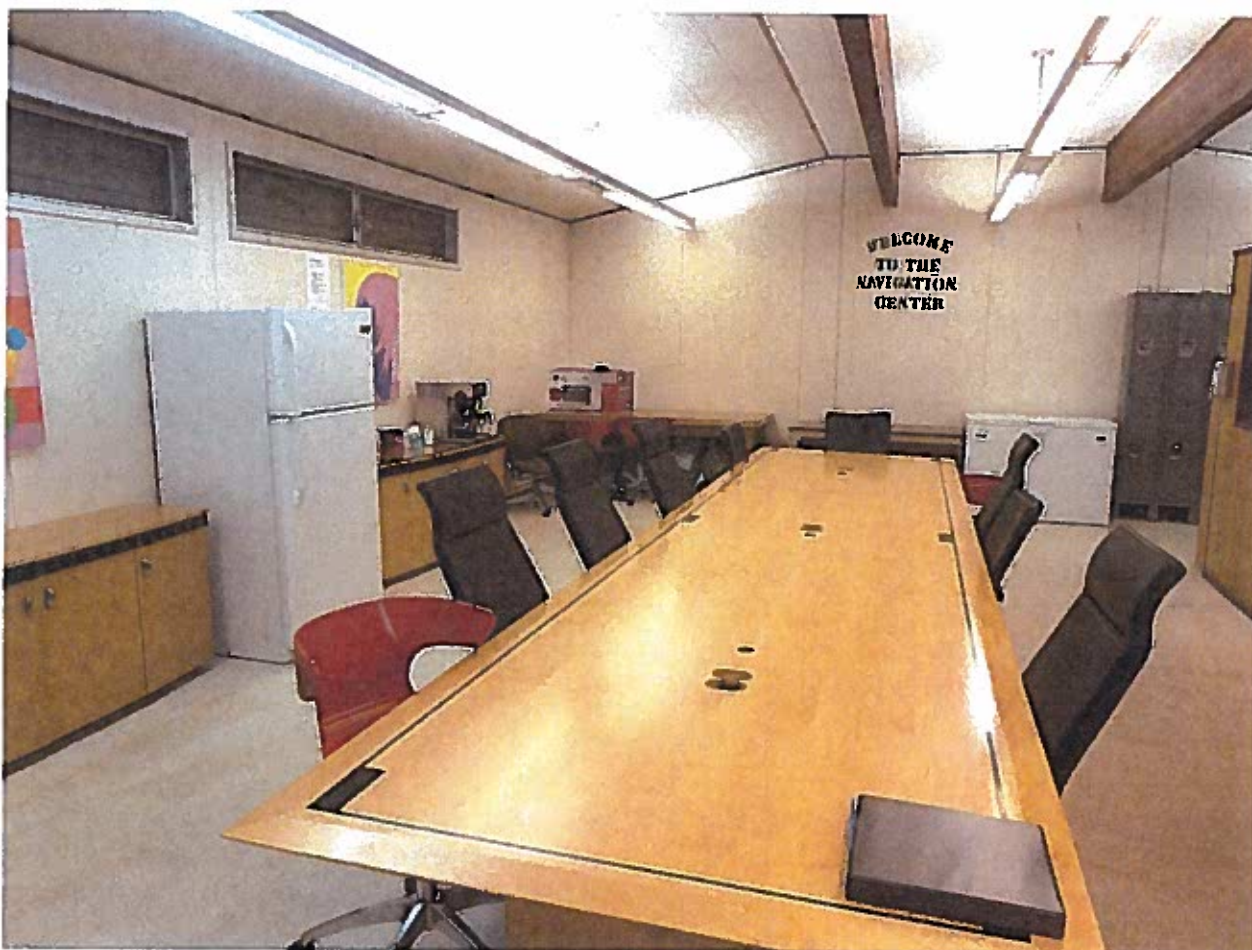
Councilmember Menor with Sam Dodge. Mr. Dodge is the Director of the Mayor's Office of H.O.P.E. (Housing, Opportunities, Partnerships, and Engagement). This photo was taken at the Navigation Center which is a pilot program designed to help homeless residents who refuse to go to a shelter. Persons treated at the Navigation Center have material or psychological barriers to using traditional shelters.



These are restroom facilities at the Navigation Center. The restrooms include shower areas.



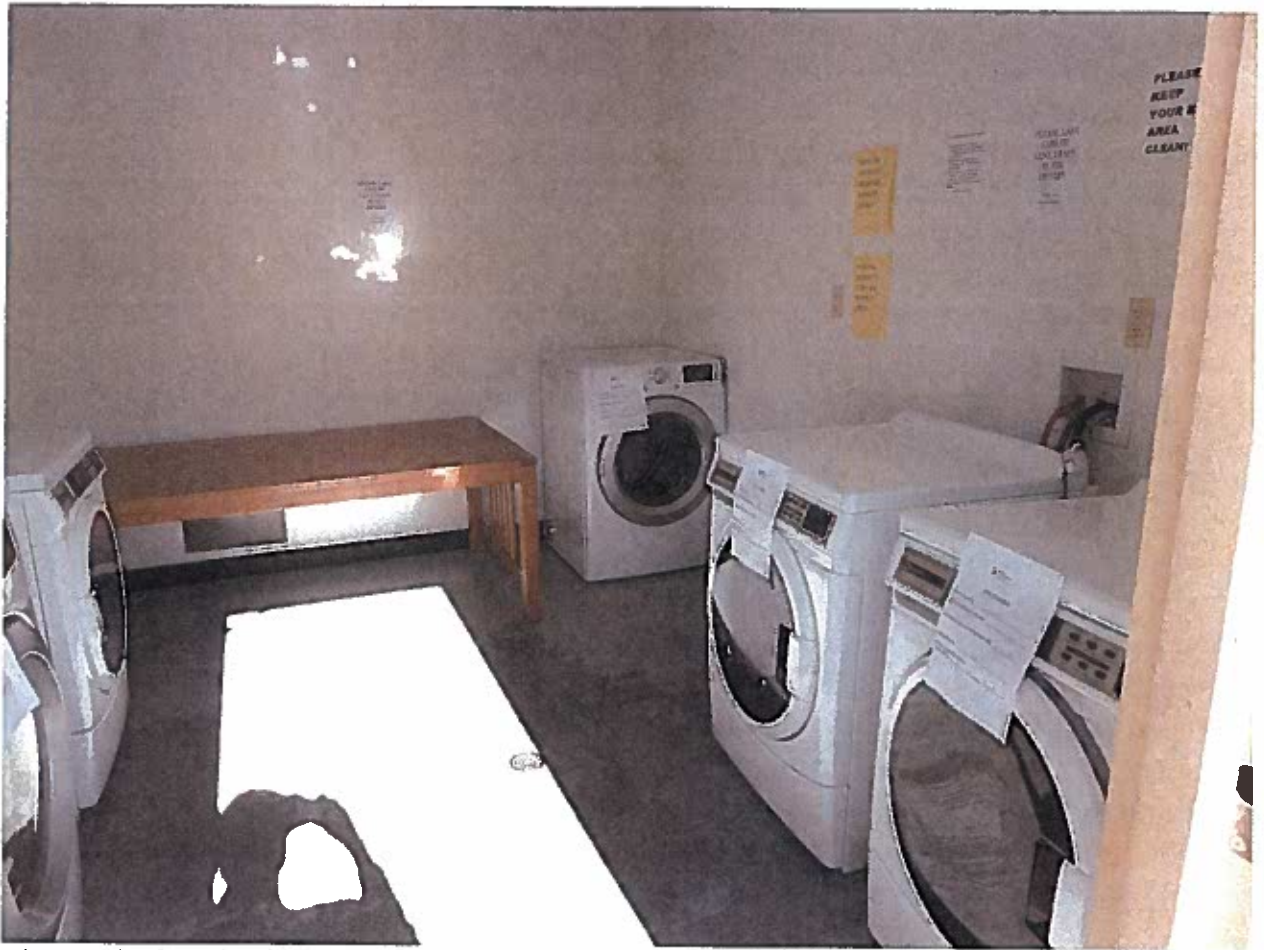
This is the entrance to the Navigation Center.



This is a conference/meeting room at the Navigation Center. The Navigation Center is effective in attracting homeless individuals who have been turned away from other traditional shelters. A major key to this success has been the accommodation of the “three P’s” of pets, partners, and possessions.



An outdoor common area at the Navigation Center. Clients here enjoy the relaxed rules of the Navigation Center. Clients are also given priority when Housing First units become available.



An on-site laundry facility at the Navigation Center. The buildings are well-maintained, clean, and sanitary.



This is the San Francisco Pit Stop. Operated by the San Francisco Department of Public Works, the Pit Stop program provides clean toilet facilities, sinks, needle receptacles, and dog waste stations in San Francisco neighborhoods where homeless individuals congregate.



Councilmember Menor with Rachel Gordon and a Pit Stop attendant. Ms. Gordon is the Director of Policy and Communications for the San Francisco Department of Public Works. The Pit Stop program employs formerly homeless individuals to work as paid facility attendants.



This is a Pit Stop program facility. The facilities are extremely well-kept. The program utilizes both portable toilets, which are trucked to and from the sites daily, and self-cleaning toilets located at various sites.



This is a dog waste station that is provided as a courtesy by the Pit Stop program.



This is a city wall that is treated with a chemical sealant to make it resistant to urine.



A City sign that encourages people to find appropriate restroom facilities.